

BOOK REVIEWS

JOHN O. SAWYER. 2006. **Northwest California: A Natural History.** (ISBN 0-520-23286-0, hbk.). The University of California Press, Berkeley, CA 94704, U.S.A. (**Orders:** California Princeton Fulfillment Services, 1445 Lower Ferry Road, Ewing, NJ 08618, U.S.A., www.ucpress.edu, 609-883-1759, 609-883-7413 fax). \$75.00, 247 pp., 26 color illustrations, 17 maps, 23 tables, 6" × 9".

John Sawyer has been interested in the mountains of northwest California since before he arrived at Humboldt State College in 1966 and has studied them ever since. This book is an answer to his question "Why does this area look that way?" As a plant ecologist his interests extended those of the conifers and the vegetation pattern.

The first two chapters cover the craggy Klamath Mountains and the rolling hills of the North Coast and highlight many specific places, especially the national and state parks and wilderness areas, well worth visiting. A cautionary theme regarding visiting these areas resounds through the book. Private (and public) lands may hide marijuana gardens. Stay on the roads, respect owners rights, and heed the "No Trespassing" signs. The following chapters deal with geological history and the changing roles of fire and land use. He illustrates how the region, in many ways the least modified portion of the state, is a place where many plants and animals have been shielded from extinction. The last chapter concerns the biological future of northwest California. Nearly all of the plant and animal species remain, as do the original vegetation patterns. Saving the wildlands that have been degraded and restoring them by setting them aside can be done. The fragments of natural tapestries can be made complete again.

His selected readings are divided by chapter, sub-divided by subject or topic within each chapter and cites the literature mentioned in the text. Of interest is his inclusion of internet sources and unpublished works. The unpublished works, theses and dissertations, are the fruit of the labors of many of his graduate students.

An index to plant names follows the bibliography. The names follow *A Checklist of the Vascular Plants of Northwestern California*, John O. Sawyer and James P. Smith. The latest edition is available at the Humboldt State University Herbarium web site. His list includes many recent nomenclatural and taxonomic changes, so the scientific names may differ from those in *The Jepson Manual*.

This remarkable volume is informative and engaging. It is a comprehensive natural history of the area and is recommended for all libraries interested in the region. John O. Sawyer is Professor of Botany, Emeritus, at Humboldt State University. Among his previous books are *Trees and Shrubs of California*, from University of California Press (2001), *Ecology and Restoration of Northern California Coastal Dunes* (1998), *Manual of California Vegetation* (1995), and numerous ecological surveys of northwestern California.—Gary Jennings, Library, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 509 Pecan Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102-4060, U.S.A.

NEIL G. SUGIHARA, JAN W. VAN WAGTENDONK, KEVIN E. SHAFFER, JO KAUMAN, and ANDREA E. THODE (eds.). **Fire in California's Ecosystems.** (ISBN 978-0-520-24605-5, hbk.). The University of California Press, Berkeley, CA 94704, U.S.A. (**Orders:** California Princeton Fulfillment Services, 1445 Lower Ferry Road, Ewing, NJ 08618, U.S.A., www.ucpress.edu, 609-883-1759, 609-883-7413 fax). \$75.00, 612 pp., 100 b/w photographs, 100 line illustrations, 8½" × 11".

Pyrodiversity promotes biological diversity. Pyrodiversity is important in ecosystems where variation of fire severity provides much of the fine-scale habitat variability. Fire is both an integral natural process in the California landscape and a growing threat to its urban and suburban developments as they encroach on wildlands. Managing the balance between fire suppression, prevention, and use is critical. This book provides an overview of the tools needed to manage that balance.

This text is laid out with the meat of the book in three parts. Part I introduces the basics of fire ecology. It includes an historical overview of fire, vegetation, and climate in California; overviews of fire as a physical and ecological process; and reviews the interactions between fire and the physical, plant, and animal components of the environment. Part II explores the history and ecology of fire in each of California's nine bioregions. Each has its own unique situation. Part III examines fire management in California, including both Native American and post-European settlement; discusses current issues related to fire policy and management, including air quality, watershed management, invasive plant species, native species, and fuel management; and considers the future of fire management. Three appendices follow covering: Plant common and scientific names; Animal common and scientific names; and, Bioregions, ecological zones, and plant alliances of California that occur in this text. A glossary and index complete the work.

This comprehensive volume, both a text and an authoritative reference tool, is the first to synthesize our knowledge of the science, ecology, and management of fire in California. It will be a useful tool for biologists seeking to develop effective management measures to maintain fire-dependent ecosystems. It will be equally useful to resource managers who are concerned with the appropriate application of fire ecology management and with intelligent, cost-effective fire suppression.—Gary Jennings, Library, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 509 Pecan Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102-4060, U.S.A.